

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4673
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0365

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SO, US
SUBJ: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE'S MEETING WITH SOMALI
PRESIDENT

1. SUMMARY. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TALCOTT W. SEELYE MET
WITH SOMALI PRESIDENT MOHAMED SIAD BARRE FOR THREE HOURS MARCH 2-3.
MEETING, DOMINATED BY RAMBLING MONOLOGUE BY SIAD, WAS FRANK IN EX-
POSING WIDE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS AND PRODUCED NO SUR-
PRISES. SIAD EMPHASIZED CENTRAL ROLE THAT ETHIOPIA PLAYS IS GSDR

STRATEGIC THINKING, MAKING CLEAR THAT ITS RELATIONS WITH US AND
USSR WERE DETERMINED IN GOOD PART BY THEIR RESPECTIVE HELPFULNESS
IN GSDR'S LONG-TERM CONTEST WITH ETHIOPIAN "IMPERIALISM". FOR THE
REST, HE SAID, GSDR WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH ANYONE WHO LENT
HELPING HAND WITHOUT SEEKING TO DOMINATE OR INTERFERE IN DOMESTIC
CONCERN OF SOMALIA. END SUMMARY.

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2. SEELYE WAS TREATED TO LONG AND SOMETIMES RAMBLING
MONOLOGUE ON HISTORY OF US/SOMALI RELATIONS AND GSDR WORLD VIEW,
WHICH WAS LARGELEY RE-PLAY OF THEME SOUNDED BY FOREIGN
MINISTRY OFFICIALS MARCH 1 (MOGADISCIO 0364). INTERLARDED
IN MONOLOGUE WAS SIAD'S CONCERN ABOUT CONTINUED "OCCUPATIN"
OF SOMALI TERRITORIES AND ETHIOPIA'S ROLE AS MAIN OBSTACLE
TO EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN THESE TERRITORIES. ETHIOPIA

WAS AN EMPIRE IN SAME SENSE AS BRITISH, ROMAN AND HELLENISTIC EMPIRES, HE SAID, AND WAS FATED FOR DISSOLUTION JUST AS OTHERS HAD BEEN. HE HAD TRIED FOR YEARS TO CONVINCE EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE THAT ETHIOPIAN IMPERIALISM WAS NEARLY PLAYED OUT AND THAT IT WAS IN ETHIOPIA'S OWN INTEREST TO WORK OUT PEACEFUL, MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT OVER SOMALI-INHABITED AREAS. EMPEROR TOLD HIM THAT HE COULD NEVER GIVE UP THE OGADEN BECAUSE IT WAS BUFFER BETWEEN SOMALIA AND AMHARA HIGHLANDS. SIAD SAID HE REGRETTED THIS POSITION BUT COULD UNDERSTAND IT OF EMPEROR. BUT WHAT ABOUT REVOLUTIONARY REGIME WHICH NOW HOLDS POWER AT ADDIS ABABA? RETENTION OF THE OGADEN DID NO GOOD TO ETHIOPIA. ETHIOPIANS WERE KILLING AND BEING KILLED THERE. THEY COULD NOT VENTURE OUT OF FEW URBAN CENTERS. THERE WERE NO APPARENT RESOURCES IN THE OGADEN. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, SAID SIAD, HE DID NOT

UNDERSTAND WHY EPMG HELD ON.

3. AND WHO WAS IT, HE ASKED, WHO CONNIVED WITH, ENCOURAGED AND PROPPED UP ETHIOPIAN IMPERIALISM IN THE OGADEN UNDER BOTH THE IMPERIAL AND THE REVOLUTIONARY REGIMES? IT WAS THE US, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY, WHICH STOOD IN WAY OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF SOMALI PEOPLE IN THE OGADEN.

4. SIAD SAID HE HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING AN "EXPANSIONIST". HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NO SOMALI, HIMSELF INCLUDED, COULD FORGET THAT PEOPLE OF THE OGADEN, DJIBOUTI, NORTHEASTERN KENYA WERE "BROTHERS", WITH SAME RELIGION, LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND HISTORY. HIS OWN FAMILY DERIVED FROM THE OGADEN. THAT DID NOT MEAN THAT GSADR INTENDED TO MAKE WAR ON ETHIOPIA OR THE

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OTHERS TO LIBERATE SOMALI-INHABITED AREAS. HE SEEKS PEACEFUL "COMPROMISE" SOLUTION RESPECTING RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE. HE IS PREPARED TO BE "REALISTIC" AND "UNEMOTIONAL" IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH PROBLEM.

5. UNFORTUNATELY, HE SAID, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT EPMG "WAS NOT PROPERLY MATURE POLITICALLY" AND THEREFORE NOT PREPARED TO TAKE UP SIAD'S OFFER TO SEEK OUT MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY FORMULA FOR THE OGADEN. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE OGADEN PROBLEM WOULD COME OUT, BUT SIAD SAID HE WAS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE SEEKING WAYS TO BRIDGE GAP WITH EPMG. HE WELCOMED MEDIATION EFFORTS OF FELLOW AFRICAN STATESMEN.

6. SIAD SAID DJIBOUTI AND KENYA QUESTIONS WERE SUBSIDIARY. AS FAR AS DJIBOUTI WAS CONCERNED, HE WAS SATISFIED THAT FRANCE WOULD HONOR PEOPLE'S WISH TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND GSADR WAS PREPARED TO RESPECT NEW STATE'S INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HE ADMITTED TO BEING WORRIED ABOUT ACTIVITIES OF UNNAMED "OUTSIDE INTERESTS" OVER DJIBOUTI AND HE SAID GSADR WOULD REMAIN VIGILANT

AGAINST ANY EFFORTS TO DENY PEOPLE "LAST WORD" ON THEIR FUTURE STATUS.

7. DESPITE THE US' PAST CONNIVANCE WITH ETHIOPIA, SIAD CONTINUED, HE WAS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN. SOMALIS HAVE ALWAYS HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR AMERICANPEOPLE, EVEN WHEN THERE WERE PROBLEMS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AT GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL. INDEED, HE RECOGNIZED THAT US ROLE IN SOMALIA HAD NOT BEEN ALL BAD, MENTIONING US HUMANITARIAN AID DURING SOMALI'S DROUGHT. HE SAID HE WAS BIG ENOUGH TO BALANCE GOOD AGAINST BAD AND HE HOPED AND EXPECTED THAT ADVENT NEW ADMINISTRATION IN US MEANT FRESH START IN BILATERAL RELATIONS." FOR HIS PART, SIAD SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE IN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE WELCOMED SEELYE VISIT AS CONTRIBUTION TO BETTER RELATIONS.

8. SIAD ALSO VOLUNTEERED FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF GSDR'S RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION. HE SAID RUSSIANS WERE SOMALIS' FRIENDS.

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"SECRET" OF RUSSIAN SUCCESS IN SOMALIA WAS THAT THEY NEVER INTERFERRED IN SOMALI INTERNAL AFFAIRS, THEY GAVE HELP WITHOUT FANFARE AND CONDUCTED THEMSELVES HERE WITH DUE MODESTY. GSDR ACCEPTED HELP WITHOUT BEING DOMINATED BY AND WITHOUT COPYING SLAVISHLY FROM THE SOVIETS. ON MY WORD OF HONOR, HE SAID, NO QUID PRO QUO (WE READ SECRET MILITARY PROTOCOL TO SOVIET/SOMALI FRIENDSHIP TREATY) WAS GIVEN OR EXPECTED FOR SOVIET HELP. SOMALIA'S REVOLUTION, IN BOTH STYLE AND CONTENT, WAS ENTIRELY IN ACCORD WITH SOMALI NEEDS AND WAS NO MERE IMPORT.

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4674

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA

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9. IN REPLY, SEELYE REITERATED THEME OF HIS MARCH 1 PRESENTATION AT FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SAID NEW ADMINISTRATION IN US ALSO LOOKED FORWARD TO FRESH START IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE TANGIBLY WITH GSDR TO EXTENT OF ITS MEANS AS RELATIONS IMPROVED. HE SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT US MIGHT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH ETHIOPIA IN SOMALI EYES AND THAT THIS COULD PLAUSIBLY, IF INCORRECTLY, BE INTERPRETED AS AN UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD SOMALIA. SEELYE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT USG HAD NO CHOSEN INSTRUMENTS IN HORN OF AFRICA AND WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH ALL PARTIES. HE SAID OUR RELATIONS WITH EPMG CURRENTLY WERE NOT GOOD AND HE COULD NOT PREDICT WHAT EFFECT CURRENT ATTITUDES WOULD HAVE ON FUTURE US AID LEVELS IN ETHIOPIA. WHATEVER WE DID OR DID NOT DO IN ETHIOPIA, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS THREAT TO GSDR.

10. SEELYE ALSO REVIEWED NUMBER OF BILATERAL IRRITANTS (MOGADISCIO 0364), AS WELL AS US POLICIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST, WHERE HE STRESSED COMMON INTERESTS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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USG AND GSDR IN ATTAINMENT LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE.

11. SEELYE SAID HE HAD NOT INTENDED MENTION GSDR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS BUT, SINCE SIAD HAD INTRODUCED SUBJECT, HE WOULD LIKE SIAD TO KNOW THAT USG HAD NO OBJECTION TO FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN GSDR AND SOVIETS PER SE. HOWEVER, IT COULD NOT HELP BEING AWARE OF AND CONCERNED BY ACTIVITY OF SOVIET UNION, OPERATING FROM FACILITIES ON SOMALI SOIL, WHICH AFFECTED US STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN AREA. HE SAID HE BELIEVED SIAD WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS CONCERN BECAUSE SIAD HAD ACKNOWLEDGED US WORLD-WIDE PEACEKEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES EARLIER IN THE MEETING.

12. COMMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO QUARREL WITH SIAD'S INTERPRETATION OF US ROLE IN HORN OF AFRICA OVER THE YEARS AND CERTAINLY WITH HIS FANCIFUL VERSION OF SOVIET ROLE HERE, BUT HIS MONOLOGUE CONTAINED NO SURPRISES, GOOD OR BAD, AND LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER BILATERAL DIALOGUE. ON WHOLE

EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SEELYE'S MEETING WITH SIAD AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, WHICH WERE CERTAINLY THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HIGH-LEVEL US AND SOMALI

OFFICIALS IN YEARS, HAVE LEFT RESIDUE OF GOODWILL ON WHICH WE
MAY BE ABLE TO BUILD. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND SIAD HIMSELF
PROMISED TO SPEED SOLUTION OF SOME OF MISSION'S MINOR PROBLEMS. TO
MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM, HOWEVER, EMBASSY STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT
USG MUST MAKE TANGIBLE GESTURE IN NEAR FUTURE TO DEMONSTRATE USG'S
DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. ONE POSSIBILITY, AND THIS IS
MEANT ONLY TO BE SUGGESTIVE, WOULD BE TO PRESENT SIAD WITH
RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LABORATORY. WE WOULD WEL-
COME OTHER IDEAS FROM DEPARTMENT TO TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT
COULD BE SMALL OPENING TO SIAD..

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